

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of the application are respectfully requested in view of the amendments and remarks herewith, which place the application into condition for allowance. The present amendment is being made to facilitate prosecution of the application.

I. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS AND FORMAL MATTERS

Claims 1-5 and 7-12 are currently pending. Claims 1, 7 and 8 are independent and are hereby amended. No new matter has been introduced. Support for this amendment is provided throughout the Specification as originally filed.

Changes to the claims are not made for the purpose of patentability within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §101, §102, §103, or §112. Rather, these changes are made simply for clarification and to round out the scope of protection to which Applicants are entitled.

II. REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1, 7 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 as allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,308,152 to Konuma et al. (hereinafter, merely "Konuma") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,241,619 to Schwartz et al. (hereinafter, merely "Schwartz").

Claims 2-4 and 9-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Konuma and Schwartz and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,835,888 to Kanevsky et al. (hereinafter, merely "Kanevsky").

Claims 5 and 12 were rejected 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Konuma and Schwartz and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,805,771 to Muthusamy et al. (hereinafter, merely "Muthusamy").

In view of the above amendments, Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Independent claim 1, as amended, is representative and recites, *inter alia*:

"wherein the unknown word dictionary includes a general purpose branch and an attribute branch connected in sequence, a loop branch is connected to the general purpose branch, wherein unknown words are repeatedly processed through the general purpose branch a predetermined number of times after going through the loop branch."

This feature is not disclosed in the applied references.

As shown in FIG. 4, an unknown-word dictionary is formed in such a way that a general-purpose branch and an attribute branch are connected in sequence to the root node. Furthermore, a loop branch is connected to the general-purpose branch. In this example, because the general-purpose branch is formed of one or more branches to which the phonemes of a pseudo-word which is various sound elements or a sound element sequence correspond, by repeating passing through the general-purpose branch and after going through the loop branch, passing through the general-purpose branch again, all the words (containing both the words entered in the standard dictionary, and the unknown words) can be recognized as a series of pseudo-words. Publ. App. par. [0067].

Thus, by repeating passing through the general-purpose branch and after going through the loop branch, passing through the general-purpose branch again as necessary, an acoustic score of a desired degree is obtained. Therefore, regarding the unknown word, the acoustic score which is calculated along the path which passes through the general-purpose branch a predetermined number of times and thereafter passes through a predetermined attribute branch

becomes larger than the acoustic score calculated along the other paths. Publ. App. par. [0073] and [0117].

Claim 1 is patentable over Konuma, Schwartz, Kanevsky and Muthusamy because those references taken alone or in combination do not teach or suggest each and every element recited in the claims. In particular, the references do not teach or suggest, “the unknown word dictionary includes a general purpose branch and an attribute branch connected in sequence, a loop branch is connected to the general purpose branch, wherein unknown words are repeatedly processed through the general purpose branch a predetermined number of times after going through the loop branch” as recited in claim 1.

For reasons similar or somewhat similar to those described above with regard to independent claim 1, independent claims 7 and 8 are also believed to be patentable.

CONCLUSION

Claims 1-5 and 7-12 are in condition for allowance. In the event the Examiner disagrees with any of statements appearing above with respect to the disclosure in the cited reference, or references, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner specifically indicate those portions of the reference, or references, providing the basis for a contrary view.

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In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is believed that all of the claims in this application are patentable and Applicants respectfully request early passage to issue of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

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